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A16 INCOMING TELEGRAM

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STATE FOR INM AND ARA, DEA FOR OCI

E.O. 12356: DECL: 10-26-88
TAGS: SNAR, EL
SUBJ: GOB INTERVENES NARCOTICS COUNCIL

REFS: A) LA PAZ 5693, B) LA PAZ 5656, C) LA PAZ 6250

1. (U) THE GOB INTERVENED THE OFFICES OF THE NARCOTICS COUNCIL, THE NARCOTICS POLICE, AND COCA CONTROL OCTOBER 22, REMOVING THE HEADS OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS AND INITIATING AN INVESTIGATION OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. VICE PRESIDENT PAZ ZAMORA CLAIMS ARRESTED NARCO-TERRORIST PAGLIAI INTENDED TO ASSISSINATE PRESIDENT SILES ZUACO. CHAPARE FARM LEADER WILL MAKE SUGGESTIONS TO GOB ON CONTROL OF COCAINE PRODUCTION AND SALE IN CHAPARE. END SUMMARY.

2. (LOU) BOLIVIAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR, MARIO RONCAL, ANNOUNCED IN A PRESS CONFERENCE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22 THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD "INTERVENED" THE OFFICES OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, (NARCOTICS COUNCIL), INCLUDING THE NATIONAL DIRECTORATE FOR THE CONTROL OF DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES (NARCOTICS POLICE), THE NATIONAL DIRECTORATE FOR THE CONTROL AND TAXATION OF COCA LEAF (COCA CONTROL) AND THE DEPENDENCIES OF THESE INSTITUTIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THEIR DIRECTORS HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM OFFICE AND PROHIBITED FROM LEAVING THE COUNTRY. WE UNDERSTAND FURTHER THAT THE HEAD OF THE NARCOTICS COUNCIL, LT. COL. RENAN REQUE, HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST. THE INTERVENTION TOOK PLACE AT 1800 OCTOBER 22, ACCORDING TO THE INTERIOR MINISTER. POLICE OFFICIALS WERE PLACED IN CHARGE OF THE VARIOUS OFFICES AS CARETAKERS.

3. (U) IN A COMMUNIQUE PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING DAY, RONCAL CITED THE TAKING OF DOCUMENTS FROM THE NARCOTICS COUNCIL ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21 AND THE PUBLICATION THE OCTOBER 22 OF A COMMUNIQUE BY THE COUNCIL, UNDER THE HEADING "PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC," WHICH EXPLAINED AND TRIED TO JUSTIFY THE EXTENSION OF A COUNCIL CREDENTIAL TO NARCO-TERRORIST PIER LUIGI PAGLIAI.

4. (U) ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, AT APPROXIMATELY 0900 THREE UNIDENTIFIED MILITARY OFFICIALS IN CIVILIAN DRESS ENTERED THE OFFICES OF THE COUNCIL AND REMOVED A NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS, APPARENTLY INVOLVING EVIDENCE ON NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. RONCAL SAID THAT THE INTRUDERS "APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN INVITED BY THE OWNERS OF THE HOUSE" TO COMMIT THE ROBBERY.

5. (U) ALSO ON THURSDAY, SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS CARRIED PICTURES OF A CREDENTIAL ISSUED TO PAGLIAI UNDER THE PSEUDONYM ALBERTO CASTES BRUNO, DATED SEPTEMBER 20, 1982, NAMING HIM A "NATIONAL COORDINATOR" OF THE NARCOTICS COUNCIL AND SIGNED BY RENAN REQUE. THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE COUNCIL PUBLISHED ITS COMMUNIQUE "EXPLAINING" THAT PAGLIAI HAD OFFERED HIS SERVICES TO THE COUNCIL AS AN INTELLIGENCE AGENT, BASED ON HIS "EXPERIENCE AND CONTACTS." THE COUNCIL SAID

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THAT HE HAD PRESENTED APPARENTLY VALID BOLIVIAN IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS UNDER HIS ASSUMED NAME AND ADDED THAT "ANY BOLIVIAN HAD THE RIGHT TO WORK FOR ANY BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCY."

6. (U) RONCAL CHARACTERIZED THE COUNCIL COMMUNIQUE AS TRANSPARENT AND UNBELIEVABLE, ADDING THAT IT MAY HAVE BEEN APPLICABLE UNDER RECENT MILITARY GOVERNMENTS WHICH SUPPORTED AND PARTICIPATED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING; NOW, HOWEVER, WITH A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT THAT HAD MADE KNOWN ITS INTENTION TO "MORALIZE" THE COUNTRY, IT WAS INEXCUSABLE. IN HIS COMMUNIQUE, RONCAL REITERATED THE GOB'S DECISION TO FIGHT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. HE ALSO STATED BOAT THE GOB WILL COOPERATE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES THAT "CLAIM" NARCOTICS VIOLATORS.

7. (U) THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, GEN. ALFREDO VILLARROEL, ANNOUNCED, OCTOBER 22, THAT THE ARMY WILL INVESTIGATE THE REMOVAL OF DOCUMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL AND THAT REQUE WILL BE QUESTIONED IN THIS REGARD. AT THE SAME TIME, VILLARROEL ASSERTED THAT NO ONE IN THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY HAD BEEN INVOLVED.

8. (U) SEPARATELY, VICE PRESIDENT JAIME PAZ ZAMORA ON OCTOBER 21 CLAIMED THAT PAGLIAI HAD PLANNED TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENT SILES ZUACO AND MANY OTHERS. HE CLAIMED THAT THE ITALIAN HAD IMPORTED SOPHISTICATED "HUNTING"WEAPONS FROM MIAMI THREE MONTHS AGO WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT THEN IN POWER. PAZ ALSO CLAIMED THAT THE NARCOTICS COUNCIL HAD FORMED "PART OF THE SAME SYSTEM" OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND REPRESSION WHICH THE GARCIA MEZA GOVERNMENT HAD PUT IN PLACE.

9. (U) ALSO IN THE NEWS, "LOS TIEMPOS" OF COCHABAMBA RAN AN INTERVIEW OCTOBER 22 WITH CARLOS MENESES, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SPECIAL FEDERATION OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE OF THE CHAPARE (FEAT) IN WHICH MENESES SAID THAT HIS FEDERATION WOULD SOON PRESENT TO THE GOVERNMENT A PLAN FOR THE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN THE CHAPARE IN ORDER TO END THE OPEN PRODUCTION AND SALE OF COCAINE THERE. HE COMPLAINED THAT PAST CONTROL EFFORTS HAD BEEN DIRECTED AT CAMPESINOS AND NOT AT TRAFFICKERS, BUT HE SUPPORTED THE CONCEPT OF CONTROL. HE SAID THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO AVOID THE INGRESS OF OUTSIDERS INTO THE REGION, WHO WERE THE CAUSE OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES.

10. (C) COMMENT: AS REPORTED IN REFS A AND B, WE WERE AWARE OF REQUE'S AND HIS SUBORDINATES' TIES TO NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS FOR SOME TIME AND TRIED TO GET THE PALDOSO GOVERNMENT TO REMOVE HIM. WE ALSO HAD BEEN TALKING TO MEMBERS OF THE SILES GOVERNMENT PASSING INFORMATION TO THEM ON IRREGULARITIES WHICH CONTINUED TO TAKE PLACE IN THE COUNCIL AND SUGGESTING THEY DO SOMETHING ABOUT REQUE. WE KNOW THAT OUR CONCERNS WERE PASSED DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENT SILES. THE REVELATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT OF PAGLIAI BY THE COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE, AS WELL AS THE "THEFT" OF DOCUMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL, PROVIDED THE FINAL IMPETUS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ACT.

11. (C) WE BELIEVE THAT IT WILL TAKE THE SILES GOVERNMENT A WHILE TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM AND GET PEOPLE IN PLACE TO CARRY IT OUT, BUT THAT THE INTERVENTION OF THE COUNCIL AND ITS DEPENDENCIES AND THE FIRING OF THE HEADS OF THESE INSTITUTIONS, AS WELL AS THE INITIATION OF INVESTIGATION OF THE COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES, ARE A SIGN THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES INTEND TO CLEAN HOUSE AND INITIATE AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM.

12. (C) WE BELIEVE THAT OUR RECENT TALKS WITH CHAPARE FARM LEADERS (REF C QE) WERE INFLUENTIAL IN GETTING THEM TO TAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS THEY ARE CONFRONTING, RATHER THAN CONTINUING WITH THEIR EMOTIONAL APPEAL FOR THE FREE MARKETING OF COCA. THE ACTIVE COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION OF THE FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CHAPARE WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF BOTH COCA REDUCTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.
END COMMENT. DRAFTED BY ROBERT A. GEHRING.
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